PRACTICAL VEDANT

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SWAMI RAMA TIRTHA

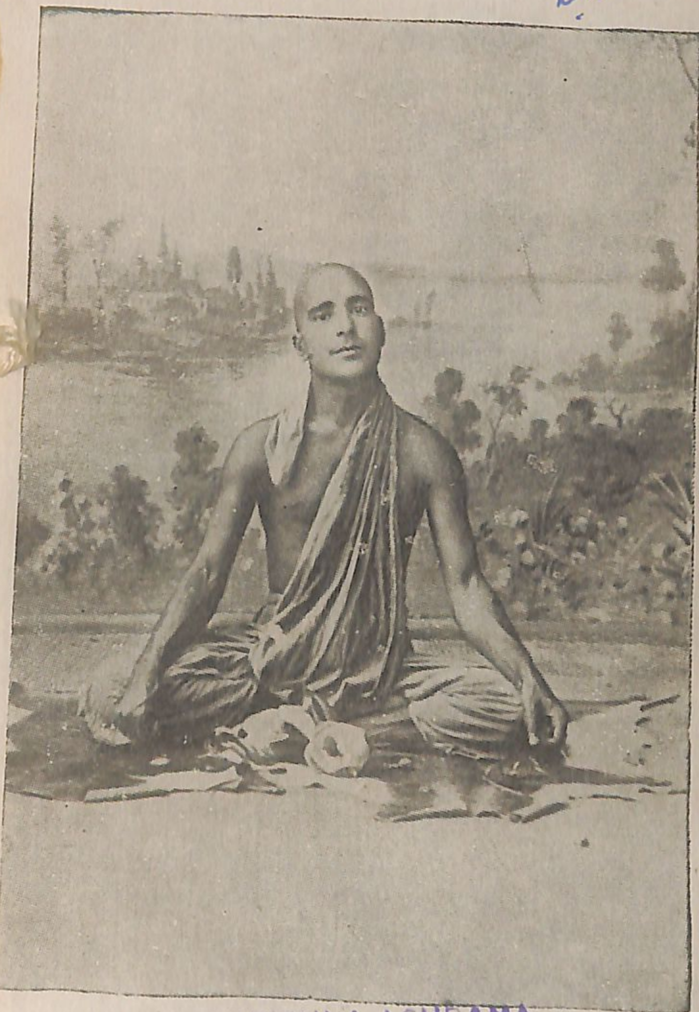
By :—

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RAMA TIRTHA PRATISTHAN

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SWAMI RAMA TIRTHA

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PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION

God's grace, good luck, or mere accident brought me in contact with the writings (in Urdu) of Swami Rama Tirtha so early as 1908 when I was a mere child learning in class IV in the Town School of Saharanpur. They touched my heart and inspired me. They set an Ideal before me and guided my way towards its realization. They have played a very important part in moulding me. I am an humble student of philosophy, both Indian and Western. I am a Professor, and I have lectured on Indian Thought and culture in America, Europe, Japan, China and Indonesia on account of my happy contact with the writings of the great sage of modern India. I studied *Yogavasistha* and wrote my *magnum opus* on this great work, having read its great praise in one of the Lectures of Swami Rama Tirtha. That is why I dedicated my first publication, *Yogavasistha and its Philosophy*, to his holiness. I am indebted to many other writers for making me what I am at present, but I owe the most to Swamiji. Hence as a token of my gratitude to him, I offer to the world a brief

outline of his philosophy of life, which was called by him *Practical Vedanta.* For want of time I could not write it in the manner I wanted to do; yet I could not even delay and postpone it on account of repeated and earnest persuation of my esteemed friend Sri Rameshwar Sahai Sinha, the Secretary of the Rama Tirtha Pratisthan. who wanted to publish it on the occasion of the celebration of 83rd birthday of Swamiji. In fact, but for his persuation this booklet would not have been produced so soon. Hence the reader owes, as I do, thanks to Sri Rameshwar Sahai Sinha, if to any body. In hurry many mistakes of printing are apt to occur and I beg pardon of the reader for them.

B. L. Atreya

Triyambakashram, Banaras.
October 13, 1955.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON
SWAMI RAMA TIRTHA

Swami Rama Tirtha's original name was Tirtha Rama, and in his life as a householder, he was known as Gosain Tirtha Rama. He was born on Wednesday, the 22nd October, 1873, on the day following the Diwali, at a small village, Muraliwala, in the district of Gujranwala, Punjab in a poor Brahman family. Even as a child, he was very intelligent, contemplative and fond of solitude. He lost his mother when he was only a few days old. As usual in those days, he was married at the age of ten. He was admitted do the primary school in his village at the age of five. By the time he was in class V, he had finished the two well-known Persian works, *Gulistan* and *Bostan*, besides his school books. He never took part in sports and games but devoted all his time to the study of Urdu and Persian literature. Having finished his primary education, he joined a High School in Gujranwala at a distance of 7 miles from his village, at the age of ten. There he was placed uuder the care of a friend of his father Bhagat Dhanna Ramji, who was a very intensely religious and pious man. The little boy Tirtha Rama accepted him as his spiritual guide. He passed his Entrance Examination in 1888, when he was only fourteen and half years old, topping the list of the successful candidates from his school and occupying the 38th position among the successful candidates in the whole of the Punjab University. He thereby won a merit scholarship to prosecute his studies further in a College. Despite the wish of his father that he should

discontinue his studies then and begin to earn to support the family, he came to Lahore for further studies and joined the Mission College. Here he had to face very great financial difficulties and pnrsued his studies under very great stress end strain, on account of which he often fell ill. To add to his difficulties he took Sanskrit as one of his optional subjects, although he had never studied it before. In spite of all this, he stood first at the Intermediate (then called F. A.) Examination in the year 1890. While still a student of the B.A. class, he had to keep his wife with him. The young Rama could not afford even to have both the ends meet every day. He utilized every moment of his time and built his remarkable personality little by little. 'Plain living and high thinking' was the way he chose. He devoted himself to his spiritual self-development so much that his course books were neglected. Poor Rama failed at the B.A. Examination by three marks in English although he had secured the highest aggregate marks in the whole of the Punjab Universtty. Next year in the year 1893, however, he stood first at the B A. Examination in the Punjab Udiversity, securing the first divisiou and winning a merit scholarship of Rs. 60/- per month. Now at the age of 19 years and a half he joined M.A. class in Mathematics in the Government College, Lahore. In 1895 when Rama was only about 20 years old, he obtained his M.A. Degsee in Mathematics with a remarkably high percentage of marks. In that very year he was appointed the Second Master in the American Mission High School, Sialkot. In 1896 he got an appointment as a Professor of Mathemtatics in the Forman Christian College, Lahore. For a short while, after some time, he was a reader in the Oriental

College, Lahore. During his career as a teacher he spent a lot of his time in studying the ancient Indian spiritual literature in Sanskrit, such as the *Upanishads, the Brahma-Sutras, the Gita* and *the Yogavasistha.* This study transformed his personality so much that he could no longer remain a mere teacher of Mathematics or a mere householder. He visualized a much higher a greater life and prepared for it by studying deeply and widely eastern and western philosophy and by living a highly moral and spiritual life. Having fully prepared for the ideal, he resigned his service in July, 1900 and proceeded to the Himalayan forests with a few companions including his wife and children. In 1901 he actually took *Sanyasa* and put on orange robes. Gosain Tirtha Rama now became Swami Rama Tirtha. As such he took a long pilgrimage in the Himalayan regions, visiting Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedarnath and Badri Narayana etc. In the year 1902, on August 28, Swami Rama Tirtha left India for Japan and delivered a number a lectures there. For there he proceeded to America where he remained for about a year and a half. He delivered many lectures on Vedanta and allied topics and endeared himself to Americans very much. He was regarded as a "Living Christ" by many Americans and was visited by all sorts of American men and women including the then President of America. Having travelled about two and a half years in foreign countries, he returned to India by the end of 1904. Having come back to India, he travelled to many places in India, spreading the message of Practical Vedanta. In 1905 he retired into solitute to Rishikesh. In 1906 he began to live at Vasistha Ashrama, a place 60 miles away from Tehri at an

altitude of 12,090 feet. Swami Rama was exactly 33 in age, when, while bathing in the Ganges, his body was carried away by an uncontrollable swift current of the river. On the morning of the fated day, just a littly before his leaving for the bath, he had a clear foreboding of the impending death which had found expression in the last paragraph of an Urdu article, written only a few minutes previous to the sad occurence. It has been translated into English thus : "Oh Death ! Take away this body if you will. I have many more bodies to live with. I can afford to live happily wearing the silver threads of the moon and the golden rays of the Sun. I shall roam free, singing in the guise of hilly brooks and streams. I shall be dancing happily in the waves of the sea. I am the graceful gait of the breeze and I am the wind inebriated. These forms of mine are wandering terms of change. I came down from the tops, knocked at doors, awakened the sleeping. Consoled one, wiped the tears of another; covered some, took off the veils of others, I touched this and I touched that I doff my hat and off I am. I keep nothing with me. Nobody can find me."

: OM :

OM

To write about Swami Rama is to go on a pilgrimage.

With the grace of God I had the good fortune of paying my homage to Swami Rama when he visited Lucknow in the year 1905. To see him was to begin, as it were, one's life anew. All meanness and smallness of spirit vanished in his sight and hnman consciousness was at once lifted up to the ethereal heights of the Divine.

A new and altogether transcendental outlook on life flew, as it were, from his eyes to the eyes of those who come direct in his contact. He had a magnetic personality. His ever-ready smile seemed to light up all surrounding space and won the instantaneous confidence and goodwill of all who came within the circle of his radiance. A poet-monk, philosopher-saint and self intoxicated sannyasi, that was Swami Rama. His inner illumination cast a halo of beauty on all around him and radiated nothing but divine love.

Swami Rama styled himself as *Rama Badshah* and termed his philosophy of life as Practical Vedanta. His teachings are no recapitulation of the ancient doctrines or Scriptures. The test of truh, the observed, lay in its rationality, practicability and actual realisation in life. Nothing should be taken as granted, he said. Long standing of a religion or wide following of a faith are no criteria of their authenticity and acceptability. Accept a thing and believe in a religion on its own merits. Examine it yourself Sift it. Religion,

he said, should be studied as Physics, Chemistry and Biology are experimented in the laboratories and tested on the touchstone of rationality. It is this attitude with which one has to proceed towards religious or philosophical views as well as political, social and economic theories and dogmas.

The great passion of Swami Rama, his poetic joys with beauty, his lyrical realisation of unity with the people who came around him and his broad human sympathy were essentially different from a mere erudite Vedantist. His heart throbbed in harmony with the rhythm of life itself and he identified himself with the pain and pleasure of humanity at large. His keen feeling of oneness is the characteristic symbol of his all-embracing mind. He disarms criticism by diffusing himself into the being of his critic and wins his enemies by a song of love which he feels with all as *his own self* A true incident of his life was while at Faizabad, a bigotted Mohammedan. went with a dagger under his dress to kill Swami Rama. His hot arguments were cooled down by Swami Rama's hypnotism of his smile and recitations of OM. The man fell on Swami Rama's feet and revealing his guilty intentions begged to be pardoned and became a saint. Such was the charm of Swami Rama's magnetic personality. He was an apostle of the life of the spirit whose daily food was the chanting of OM.

Swami Rama was born in 1873 in a middle class Brahmin Goswamin family in village Muraliwala, District Gujranwala, Punjab. He was essentially a teacher-first of Mathematics in academic institutions and later of the Vedanta philosophy of life to the world

asan institution, whose problems he solved and proved with the help of Mathematical equations. He turned a monk in 1901, and lectured in Japan and America from 1902 to 1904. In Dec. 1905 he returned to India, lectured in various places of India and left themortal abode in 1906 on the Dipawali day when he was 33 years old.

Swami Rama, like Swami Vivekanand brought about a true spiritual Renaissance of India. He exhorted the people of India to rise from their lethargy, abandon idle dreams and barren rituals and put themselves to the task of winning freedom, not by conquest over others but over one's own self. He was one of the builders of modern Indian Thought. His *mantra* was सर्वंखल्विदं ब्रह्म and it was his deep conviction that self-realisation would banish conflict and strife and bring peace and joy to the world. In his tours in America, Japan and India he made "a strong, emphatic protest against the rampant selfishness, the intolerance, hostility of religious sects and fanatics, the unceasing self-aggrandisement of European nations at the cost of Asiatic brethren" I dare say "that he spoke and wrote about India as fearlessly and boldly as on any abstruse problem of metaphysics and I may add without fear of contradiction that the great courage and spirit of martyrdom that he always evinced in advocating the cause of his fallen motherland before foreign nations," as in his Appeal to Americans on behalf of India, have been rare even among our best politicians and sanyasis. He has been a source of great inspiration to a majority of Congress Workers who fought undauntedly for the freedom of

India under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi. It was in the year 1900 that he had predicted that India would regain more than half of her original glory in less than 50 years' time which came out literally true. The theory of *panchshila* propounded by Indian Statesmen is but a reflexion of his teachings. Swami Rama was a great sage of Modern India.

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My first meeting with Dr. Atreya, the author of this brochure, dates back the 1925. Since then I have known him as a great adorer of Swami Rama and an ardent believer in his teachings. Dr. Atreya is a scholar of Philosophy and Religion and his amiable nature emboldened me to request him to write a handy book on the teachings of Swami Rama, which he has so kindly done. The present booklet contains within its covers the salient principles and teachings of Swami Rama narrated in an easy, interesting style. I hope sanguine readers who have little time to study the complete works of Swami Rama, In woods of God-Realisation, will find it an indispensible and faithful guide. The purpose of the book can only be achieved when readers not only study and mediate the teachings of Swami Rama, but also put them into practice and thus elevate their characters and lives.

May his choicest blessings fall on those who are seekers of Truth.

Rameshwar Sahai Sinha,
Secretary Rama Tirtha Pratishthan,
Sarnath, Banaras.

THE PRACTICAL VEDANTA OF SWAMI RAMA

Introduction

Like the Great Swami Shankaracharya of yore, Swami Rama Tirtha, one of the builders of Modern Indian Thought, achieved in the domain of spiritual realization much more within a short span of 33 years than most people do in three scores and ten. His life, speeches and writings will continue to inspire the youth of India for a long time. *In Woods of God-Realization*, the Complete Works of Swami Rama Tirtha, published by the Rama Tirtha Pratisthan, Sarnath, is one of the most valuable treasures of our modern inspirational literature and should be read widely by our youth. It inspires, ennobles and enlightens. It contains the essence of the teachings of the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagwadgita*, the *Yogavasistha*, and a host of other spiritual works of ancient India expressed in simple and intelligible manner suited to modern times. Swami Rama's teachings are not merely restatements of the ancient doctrines. They are well-digested and well-tested views which stand the test of experience and logic, and which are well-suited to our times. He was not a blind follower of any Scripture, thinker, or view. For him the test of truth lay in its actual realization in life, in its rationality and practicability. How boldly he has stated his opinion with regard to acceptance of views of others: "Accept not a religion because it is the oldest; it being the oldest is no proof of its being the true one. Sometimes the oldest houses have to be pulled down and the oldest clothes must be changed......Accept not a religion because it is the latest. The latest things are not always the best, not having

stood the test of time. Accept not a religion on the ground of its being believed in by a vast majority of mankind, because the vast majority of mankind believes practically in the religion of Satan, in the religion of ignorance. There was a time when the vast majority of mankind believed in slavery, but that could be no proof of slavery being a proper institution. Believe not in a religion on the ground of its being believed in by the chosen few. Sometimes the small minority that accepts a religion is in darkness, misled. Accept not a religion because it comes from a great ascetic, from a man who has renounced everything; we see that there are many ascetics, men who have renounced everything, yet they know nothing, they are veritable fanatics. Accept not a religion because it comes from princes or kings; kings are enough spiritually poor. Accept not a religion because it comes from a person whose character was the highest; oftentimes people of the grandest character have failed in expounding the truth......Believe not in a religion because it comes from very famous men. Sir Issac Newton is a very famous man, and yet his emissary theory of light is wrong. Accept a thing and believe in a religion *on its own merits*. Examine it yourself. Sift it." (*Heart of Rama*. pp. 27). It is this attitude that we have to adopt not only in accepting or rejecting religious or philosophical views, but also political, social and scientific views and theories.

Attitude towards the *Shastras* (Scriptures)

Shastras or Scriptures have had a great hold on Indian mind, and on account of this tendency thinking in India has never been as free as it should have been. Our greatest thinkers have refrained from claiming originality for their

thought and have at best been mere commentators. They have laboured hard to seek for the support of their views from the ancient scriptures, *Shrutis* and *Smritis*. A deviation or divergence from the views, expressed therein, has always been regarded as blasphemous. Too much dependence upon the Shastras has made us cripples in thought and action, and we have often failed to adjust properly to the changing needs and environments of our country and society. All reformers have been looked down upon as heretics and thus have been deprived of the great influence they could have exercised upon the people in a freer and thoughtful society. Swami Rama Tirtha's view on the use of Shastras is worth noting. He says, "Be not mummies of thousands of years. Do not put the living into the hands of the dead. Think yourselves, meditate yourselves." (VIII, 84, 85). "We have to solve our own problems and to begin to see with our own eyes rather than to continue peeping through the eyes of our most venerable seers and sages of the past gone by.. Changeless change is the essential condition of life. No one is to be pitied except those whose future lies behind and whose past is constantly in front...The cause of India's present trouble has been the diverting of the natural order, making the living self a slave to the ghosts of old books". (V. 86-87). "The health of a society consists in continuous flux, growth and appropriate change......The most perfect adaptation to conditions needs readaptation as conditions themselves speedily change. The dream of a static millenium, when struggle and change shall be over, when all shall be secure and happy, finds no warrant in our knowledge of man and the world. So let us adapt our Karma-Kanda (rites and customs) to our environments.

Our wants today are different from those of the Vedic Rishis." (V. 97).

Swami Rama Tirtha had a great respect for the spiritual wisdom of the *Upanishads* but he did not believe in the rites, ceremonies and customs laid down in the *Smritis* which reflect the changing social and individual needs and adaptations of our life in the past and have little to do with the present or future. "Do inherit the wisdom of the *Upanishads*; but on the material plane it is only the absorbing and assimilating of the practical methods of Japan and America that will make you fit to survive." (V. 113). "Keep to the *Shruti*, Hindus, change the *Smriti* and Karma Kanda according to the needs of the day." (V. 120). In fact this attitude of Swamiji is in line with our traditions and culture. Our spiritual outlook and ideals have been the same and shall remain the same throughout the ages, and these are embodied in the works like the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Yogavasistha*, but the individual life and social laws and institutions of different ages and different places have been different, as they suited to the different historical, social, political and geographical conditions.

The Practical Vedanta

The spiritual wisdom of India which is embodied in the above-mentioned Sanskrit works and which is the real and lasting spirit of our culture is called Vedanta, and particularly, the Practical Vedanta by Swamiji, simply because it is not to remain a mere dogma to be believed in but is to be a guiding star of our life and society. He says, "If Vedanta is not practised in every day life, what is the use of it? Vedanta printed in books and placed on shelves to be eaten up by worms, won't do. You must leave it......If Vedanta does not

make you happy, if it does not cast off your burdens, then kick it aside." (III. 253). "The temple of Vedanta is in the shop, in the street, in your bed, in your study, in your dining room, in your drawing room, in your parlour. These are the temples where you have to live and realise the Truth" (III 233). Practical Vedanta, according to Swamiji, is the healthiest attitude of mind which stands for freedom, progress, peace and happiness. It means a life lived in tune with Nature and all fellow-creatures. It means a life characterised by activity, happiness and universal kinship. In the words of Swamiji, "Vedanta is health—physical. mental and spiritual". (V. 164). Giving up the exclusive claim to anything and everything......is Vedanta. In other words, destroying all hedges and limitations, fencing not yourself by fencing others out, but as God regaining supreme dominion over every power..... in the world is Vedanta". (V. 137). Vedanta is not cynicism, pessimism and asceticism. as many people in India have taken it to mean. "Never does Vedanta inculcate that you should lead the life of an ascetic. Never, never". (VI.90). "Vedanta is not pessimism" (VI.93). "It is rather the highest pinnacle of optimism" (VI.92). "Vedanta fills you with energy and strength". (VI.95). Practical Vedanta in the words of Swamiji is :—

"Pushing, marching Labour and no stagnant Indolence ;
Enjoyment of work as against tedious drudgery ;
Peace of mind and no canker of suspicion ;
Organization and no disaggregation ;
Appropriate reform and no conservative custom ;
Solid real feeling as against flowery talk ;
The poetry of facts as against speculative fiction ;

The logic of events as against the authority of departed authors ;

Living Realization and no more dead quotations

Constitute Practical Vedanta."

Swamiji's philosophy can really be called Practical Vedanta to differentiate and distitinguish it from other systems of philosophy prevalent in the world, which are meant only for theoretical discussions, and rarely for living by.

The Theoretical Basis of the Practical Vedanta

This type of behaviour is not easily acquired. It it an outcome of a fully realized intellectual and emotional attitude towards the world and individuals around us. It is an expression of a philosophy of life or an outlook acquired by deep thinking on and understanding of the nature Self and Reality and by an effort at living by it. Swami Rama Tirtha devoted almost all the years of his conscious existence on earth in acquiring this outlook. Here are the epistemological and metaphysical aspects of his philosophy.

How We know the Reality

The Mind and the Intellect are incapable of knowing the reality of which they are only parts or partial expressions. In the words of Swamiji, "The mind or intellect can in nowise be expected to know the great Unknowable which is its very source" (V.1-2). "The interior of Nature will for ever remain a mystery to the mind and it is not given to human intellect to sound the depth of Cosmos" (V.9). "Thought cannot transcend the sphere limitation" (V.10). "Reason cannot penetrate the Infinite" (V.148).

What then is the way of penetrating the secrets of nature and of knowing the mystery of the Universe? Swami Rama Tirtha uses the word "feeling" in a peculiar sense and calls it the only way of entering deep into Reality. He says, "Your intellect has worked in the material plane, in the empirical realms, but in the realms of metaphysics you have to come by one way, and one way only, and that way is the way of *realization that way is the way of love, feeling, faith, rather than knowledge.*" (VI.121). ' It carries its own proof with itself" (VI. 133). "Heart is the entrance to the jubilee hall of Inspiration; head is the exit. Love inspires, head expounds. Feeling always precedes thinking... Change the feelings in an individual, and his whole method of thinking will be revolutionized." (V. 31). "There is no knowledge without inspiration. All knowledge comes through inspiration. When you vibrate with the whole world, when the business of the world is your business, when the heart of the world is your heart, when you *feel* that you pulsate in the whole Universe, when either consciously or unconsciously you are in that state, then knowledge comes and fills you; *this is the way.*" (IV. 282).

"Knowledge", according to Swamiji, "is of two kinds, through the intellect and through the *feeling*. Knowing the true Self through *feeling* is knowledge; salvation is by living faith or living knowledge." (VIII.64). "One must live and feel it." (VIII.63).

How are then intellect and feeling related in the process of Self-knowledge? Intellectual thinking helps us in preparing or that state of feeling which ultimately lifts the curtain of our ignorance. "The refining of creed or the thinning of

the curtain comes chiefly through the intellect and the lifting of the veil is effected through feeling." (IV.47).

Swami Rama does not mean by feeling a blind faith in or acceptance of or living by a creed of any Shastra (Scripture) or Prophet, as many a religion means. He is very much against accepting any statement made by any authority merely on the ground of its coming therefrom. He advises us to examine the truth of it in our own experience. He says, "Do not take these things on authority; a faith that is founded on authority is no faith. Try the experiments yourself; verify them yourself and approach them in a true scientific way", (VI.75). "Be not hypnotised through the opinion of others; and the more a man stands above this weakness of being hypnotised by others the more free he is" (1.57). "Judge not through the opinion of others." (1.56). "Independence and freedom imply using your own ears on every occasion, using your own eyes on every occasion". (1.55). "You cannot depend upon any authority outside yourself, whether it be Krishna, Christ, or Buddha". (IV.146).

Analysis of Experience

Analysis and understanding of experience, which is the only datum we have on the basis of which we have to build our philosophical outlook, pave the way for feeling and realization of the reality. How is it done? The first requisite is to take a comprehensive view of our experience. Almost all the western thinkers and scientists have based their knowledge and philosophy on the study of the nature of a limited part of our experience. Hence their views are partial and defective. The entire human experience consists of Waking, Dream, Deep Sleep and Samadhi (mystic

illumination), and to measure the whole in terms of a part, namely the waking state, is wrong. Our concepts of Self and objective world must be based on the understanding of the total experience. Other wise they will be defective, as actually those of most scientists and philosophers are who take the waking state as the only or the standard experience. Swami Rama therefore rightly says :—"All the philosophy of Europe and America is based on the experience in the wakeful state and takes little or no notice of the experience of the dreaming or deep sleep state....How can you solve a problems correctly when you take up only a part of the data? Vedanta takes the whole data. Your data are threefold, your worlds of experience are threefold, and all this should be considered." (IV. 113).

How are these states related to the experiencing self and to each other? Swamiji tells us, "The world of wakeful state disappears entirely in the other two states and yet you, that is to say, the Self, the real "you" remains the same. The unchangeable and immutable principle, this reality, runs through "the threefold worlds, and is your true Atman or Self". (IV, 113-4). One half of your life is passed in sleep and one half in waking ...The experiences of your dream-state are also experiences....If the wakeful state has any claim on attention, the dream world must also be duly considered". (IV.119) "If on the authority of wakeful experience the dreaming experience is unreal, so is the wakeful experience non-real on the authority of dream land and deep sleep states". (IV. 119).

Both the dream and the waking world vanish into nothing in the mystic state of Samadhi which is experienced by at least a few persons. As Swamiji says, "If you rightly take the

experience of all the perfect men, even that will convince you that this solid seeming world is unreal. In that state there is no *meun teun*, no duality, no plurality, no personality, no world All phenomenon is melted down to nothing," (IV. 120-21).

From a close study of the four states of experience it becomes clear that the objective contents of each experience are short-lived ; none of them persists continuously throughout the change from one to the other. Only the subject that experiences persists. It is the unchanging and unperishing witness of all the varying and ephemeral contents of the varying and changing states of experience. That subject is the real Self of us. For, as Swamiji says, "Reality is that which persists". (III-7). "In all these apparently different manifestations there is one indivisible, unchangeable, eternal, constant reality". (I.73). Whereas the personal egoes of the various states are different in different states, the witness of all the states and their contents is the immutable consciousness which is the real Self of us. As Swamiji puts it, "The dreaming subject is not the same as the waking subject". (III.244). The subject takes a third shape in the deep sleep condition. "Your consciousness then identifies itself with nothingness". (III.245). "There real Self in you is the same in deep sleep, the dreaming, and the wakeful states That thou art." (III.249). "There is something in you which is awake in the deep sleep state. That is distinct from the subjective consciousness. That is pure consciousness." (III.245).

What ground is there to think that even during the experience of sleep there is Self-consciousness ? The real Self, according to Swamiji, never sleeps. It is aware of the sleep-

ing experience and of there being no particular and distinct objects in that experience. It never goes to sleep. It is the ever conscious witness of the unconscious state of sleep It is that which notices and reports the nothingness experienced in sleep. "Had you been asleep", asks Swamiji, "who would have told us about the nothingness of that? You are something beyond the intellect; the intellect was asleep, but you were not asleep". (I.137)."The real Self in you, which remains the same in the deep sleep state, which remains the same in the wakeful state. There is something which remains the same when you are in a swoon, which remains the same under all circumstances". (I. 139).

Even during deep sleep something in us keeps awake and active otherwise the life functions of the body would have ceased. "If you had been asleep. who would have made the blood run through the blood-vessels, who would have continued the process of digestion in the stomach? Who would have continued the process of the growth of your body, if you had really fallen into the deep sleep state? So you are something which never sleeps. The intellect sleeps, but not you". (I. 137).

The Self which persists throughout the experience and which is the witness of all the varying states of experience and the multitude of objects therein, is of the nature of consciousness, of light that reveals everything and is self-revealed It is the light of the Self that reveals the objects in waking and dream and absence of objects in sleep. "It is the Light within you that enables you to see all sorts of things in dreams...That light remains constant in deep sleep state as well as the dreaming state.." (III. 250).

The Constitution of Man

An analysis of Experience thus shows that Man is composed of two factors: one the immutable, self-illumined Self and the other changing and varying personal selves which function in the different states of experience, waking, dream and sleep. These personal selves are themselves constituted by three bodies, called the *sthula* (gross), *sukshma* (subtle) and *karana* (causal). Thus says Swamiji: "Man has got the changeable things in him, and there is in man the immutable, the unchangeable, the eternal, real Atman. "The real Atman is like the sun, and the changeable elements are the three bodies, the gross body, the subtle body and the seed body. In Sanskrit they are called the *sthula, sukshma* and *karana shariras.* These are not the self, but the not-self These are variable, fickle, these are not your Self Your Self is immutable, the unchangeable". (I. 89). Their nature and functions are thus stated: "The nothingness of the deep sleep state is the seed body which is changeable, mutable, alterable and fickle". (I.99). "Out of that nothingness of your deep sleep state comes out your dreamland experience". (I. 100). "The deep sleep state is called the seed body, and the body of your dreamland is called the subtle body, and the body of your wakeful state is called the gross body" (I.103). "Every day when you go to bed at night you put off the gross and keep only the subtle body". (I. 105). Only the subtle body works in your dreams" (I. 103). "The causal body is the subconscious storehouse of all the impressions and latent energies of man. All the actions, movements, behaviour and circumstances of man are simply the working out of the hidden material in the Causal Body..... The causal body is the core of man, the very centre". (VI. 169).

"The mental desires, the mental feelings, emotions, the cravings fothe heart, the wishes of the mind, willing and yearning of the soul, as you might say. This is what makes up the subtle body". (VI. 180).

The causal body is the most important of all the bodies as it is the seed and source of all that finds expression in the other two bodies, and therefore in our life. Directions and suggestions given to this body produce wonderful results in the subtle and gross bodies. "Let the causal body be instilled with the suggestions of health, and the physical body is bound to be healthy. Let the causal body be saturated with the suggestion of Godhead, and the man is bound to be a prophet. Let the causal body be imbued with the suggestions of slavery and weakness, and the physical body must be weak and slavish. A man is the architect of his own fate inasmuch as it is his own Causal Body that is responsible for all his environment." (VI. 1623).

The nature of Sleep. Dream and Waking and their relation to time and space

In the deep sleep state, no egoism is present. "You have no idea of "I am asleep", "I grow", "I digest food" "I do this", that is, there is no ego; the real Self is there, but no ego is there. This false, apparent ego which is looked upon as the self by people is not there. In the dreaming state it becomes apparent" (I. 107)......"The egoism—I do this, I do that, all this egoism—this selfish apparent self makes its appearance in the wakeful state also." (I. 107). "In your dreamland the ego......is fickle, changeable, vague; unsettled,

hazy......and in your wakefull state this ego is definite, permanent," (I. 107-8).

As is the case with the ego, so is it with Time and Space. "In your deep sleep state you have no idea of time, no idea of space, no idea of causuality. You come down to the dreamland. There time makes its appearance, space comes into existence, and casuality also comes into existence. ....The time, space and casuality of your dreamland come out of your sleep state, in the same way as the tiny sprout comes forth from the seed, in its feeble, weak form, and in your wakeful state the time, space and casuality ripen dream is fickle, vague, hazy, dim, unsettled, indefinite, and the time of the wakeful state is naturally the ripened form, I say, the strong developed form of your time in the dreamland." (I. 109). Similarly—"The things which you find in your dreaming state were not present in the deep sleep state. Out of the deep sleep state they sprang up". (I. 111). "And in your wakeful state these *a priori* forms of time and space ripen into a stiff, rigid form, become definite and get a rigidity of their own." (I. 111).

Thus we see that the gross comes out of the subtle and the latter comes out of the casual, as is evident in our experience. Out of that (*sushupti*) comes the dreamland and from that flows out, as it were, or developes the wakeful, gross body." (I. 113).

The nature of sleep is ignorance. "That chaos or nothing of your deep sleep state is ignorance. condensed ignorance." "Out of that ignorance or darkness comes this world, comes this differentiation and change". (I. 115).

Both the subject and the object of dream and waking states are the outcome of the subject objectless sleep state. "The subject and object make their appearance simultaneously. There in your dreams, you become the seer on one side and the object seen on the other side." (I. 115). "In your wakeful state also you are the objects seen and you are the seeing subject". (I. 115).

What is the true of the individual experience is also true of the Cosmic Experience. "The same law which governs the tickling down of a tear from the lover's eye also governs the revolutions of suns and stars" (I. 33). "Nature repeats itself over and over again". (I. 33). There are three kinds of world experience as there are three kinds of individual experience. "The first—*Pratyaksha samsara*—gross material world. The second—*Manasika samsara*—psychic or astral world. The third—*Avijnata samsara*—which literally means the world of the unknown". (IV. 63). Just as the individual world of sleep, dream and waking is sustained by the Self so the entire cosmos. "All the world seen by a man is purely and simply sustained by his own Self". (VI. 163). Heaven and hell are within you". (I. 23). "You are the infinite Power, the Divinity, the constant, immutable, unchangeable one. That you are. Know that and you find yourself inhabiting the whole world, inhabiting the whole Universe". (I. 73).

The entire Cosmos is thus rooted in the Self in which the distinction of the individual and Cosmic nature does not exist. The same Self is the ground and witness of the individual as well as the cosmic experiences, "You are the Absolute Reality," says Swamiji, "in which all this world, all the phenomena of the Universe are mere waves or eddies". (VI. 35).

Idealism

The entire experience of the world according to swamiji is mental and imaginary and is not in essence different from a dream. "Even this solid seeming world, this rigid stern world, is unreal, not different from your dream. There is a difference only of degree and not of kind. Your wakeful world is also a dream, a solidified dream, and in this solid seeming world of yours...the object as well as the subject are the creation of your real Self, and nothing more". (VI.237). This world dream is not over at death. It continues even after death. "Sometimes we sleep in sleep". "Dream in dream or double dream". "This wide world is also a dream. In this dream of a wide world, all time, space and causation, all this universe which you see outside is the object, and what we call "my body", "my little self" is also the object. When an ordinary man dies the long dream of Maya or ignorance is not destroyed, but remains just the same......Death simply means the subsisting of the subject...So when a man dies here he wakes up again in the next birth". (VI.239).

The experience of the world is dependent on the activities and movements of the mind. It continues on account of self-imagination and auto and hetero suggestion. "*Manas* in motion and the phenomenal world being the obverse and reverse of one and the same thing, *manas* at rest is identical with Consciousness". (VIII.168). "The world is simply the creation of the hypnotism of people who in this self-created bedlam keep each other in countenance by mental suggestion." (V.140). "All the world seen by a man is purely and simply sustained by his own Self...It is just like a man being put in a hypnotic state and being forgotten to be dehypnotised. All

the people in the world are thrown into a queer hypnotism of the world and they will take long, long time to be dehypnotised". (VI.163-64).

Why should there be this world-imagination in the Self and when did it start are the most difficult questions to answer. The Vedantist answers them by pointing out the absurdity of the questions. "Why should this maya or ignorance (on account of which we experience the world) overpower the true self or Atman?" (VI.99). "Vedanta plainly says, there is no answer to this question" (VI. 99). "It does not claim to be able to explain the origin of the world; this is beyond the sphere of intellect or comprehension" (VI.105). Your can never know the why, when, and wherefore of the dream as long as you are dreaming. Wake up and the whole is gone, wake up and all disappears" (VI.111-12). All the empirical solutions of the problem are impossible, When the dreaming subject wakes up, the whole problem is solved" (VI.113). "Similarly, on waking up to a realization of truth...you can see that all this world was a mere joke, mere plaything, mere illusion, nothing else" (VI.113-14) "It is just like a dream" (VI.114). "In the dream when you see different kinds of objects, in reality it is not you that see these things ; it is the subject in the dream, which is created along with the other objects in the dream...which sees all these scenes. The real Self, the Atma, the true God, has never forgotten anything. This idea of a false ego is itself the creation of Maya, or an illusion of the same sort as the other objects are" (VI.114-15). "The question 'why, when and wherefore' also is an illusion" (VI.117). "There is no why, when and wherefore in the Reality which is beyound Time,

beyond Space, beyond Causation" (VI. 118). "This whying tendency and this querying inclination and all the questioning propensity is a part of the inductive hypnotic state. In the dehypnotised state none of these is present. In the real original state none of these is present, no quesions are possible" (VI. 165).

Another question which is generally asked about the objective world is whether it is real or unreal. Swamiji answer it in a strictly logical way : "You cannot call it real...Because reality means something which lasts for ever. It doesnot last for ever...In your deep sleep state it disappears ; in your state of realization, perfection or liberation, it disappears...It appears to you to be present, therefore, you have no right to call it unreal ..Then is the world partly real and partly unreal ? ..Unreality and reality cannot subsist together" (VI. 120).

What then is the status of the world in relation to the Atman or Brahman, the absolute Reality ? Swamiji answers : "On the authority of higher personal experience, on the authority of the supreme personal experience, we say that when the Absolute Reality is realized, all these qualities (multiple objects), all this time and space vanish. Thus from the standpoint of the Absolute Reality, they never existed but from the standpoint of these qualities, (we have to say that) these depend upon the *Adhisthana*, the Absolute.. In fact the Absolute Reality is absolute, is beyond all qualities, but these qualities depend upon the Absolute Reality from their own standpoint." (VI. 34). According to *Vedanta*, all this universe is in reality nothing else but one indivisible, indescriblable Reality, which we cannot even call reality, which

transcends all language, which is beyond Time, Space and Causation, beyond everything. In this underlying substratum, substance, or whatever you might call it, *appear* names, forms, and differentiations, or what you may call, energy, activity or vibrations " (VI. 132).

The world-appearance in or the apparent changes on the surface of the Absolute do not in the least affect the immutability and integrity of the Absolute. The Absolute has no history or development or evolution of its own, although the appearances on it may seem to have all these. It is the inexhaustible seed. "The real seed is the same yesterday, today and for ever. It is infinite, it does not die when the seed form dies ; it is indestructible, it is unchangeable ; there can be no increase and there can be no decrease in it" (I. 65). "That does not die, it remains the same" (I. 65). "The real infinity within the outward apparent finite forms of the monad does not change, it multiplies not, it decreases not, it remains the same" (I. 67).

The Real Self of each one of us is that Absolute Reality which is the unchanging ground of all the changes, the indescribable and qualitiless substratum of all the qualities, the one Unity underlying all the apparent multiplicity. "The body you are not. You are the infinite power, the divinity, the constant, immutable, unchangeable one. That you are. Know that and you find yourself unhabiting the whole world, inhabiting the whole universe" (I.73). "You are the infinite power which is only One" (I. 77). "This world is like a mirror-house, and all these bodies are like different mirrors, and your true Atman or real Self is reflected on all sides" (I. 77). "The God of men and nations is within you" (I. 23). "The Source

of Power, Joy and life is within you" (I. 23). "The infinite within the finite is incapable of being seen, incapable of being heard, incapable of being taught, of being imagined, and yet all that you see is through it. It is indescribable and yet the fountainhead, the essence of all that is described" (I. 80). "That Infinite Joy, that Supreme Bliss, that Infinite Happiness (the Absolute Reality) you are ; that is your real Self ; that is your Atman. Know that and you are above all wants and needs. Have that and the whole Universe is yours" (IV. 79).

Is this philosophical outlook an idealism of the type which prevails in the west ? If so is it subjective or objective ? Or is it something different from both ? Swamiji answers the questions. For him the concepts of "mind" and "matter" as different and separate from each other do not hold good. "If *matter* were different from *mind*, then mind would not affect matter, and *vice versa*" (VIII. 56). But it is a fact of everyday experience that both are affected by each other. "The Vedantic theory of perception for transcends these (Idealism and Realism).........The Vedanta Philosophy reconciles each and all of them" (the contending western theories) (IV. 11). In short, the Vedantic theory about the problem of perception is: "The world is not a creation of the subject of the wakeful state or the subject of the dreamland ; the world is a creation of myself, the real God, the Real Atman" (VI. 17). "The subject in the dreamland is a thing of the same sort as the objects in the dreamland are. When you wake up the subject of the wakeful state is of the same sort as the objects of that state" (VI. 17). Vedanta says to the Idealists, "You are right in saying that

All the names and forms of this world could not come about without the action of the subject; that all qualities, attributes and properties of things depend upon the activity and action of the understanding or mind, or the subject.........But you are not right in saying that there is nothing outside this small mind of your". Vedanta says to the Realists, "You are right in saying that this phenomenal world could not appear without the action of any outside reality". "Realism is wrong when it says that all our perception is due solely and wholly to outside action and not to the subjective activity." "There must be something outside, which acted upon the subject" (VI. 19-20-21). "There is the Thing-in-itself or the Reality in every object in the world ....There is present the Thing-in-itself in your intellect as well" (VI. 23). "All differences are due to qualities" (VI. 30). "The phenomenal world consists of these qualities, and they depend upon the Absolute Reality" (VI. 33). "The Absolute Reality *supports* all these quailities" (VI. 30). In itself, however, "The Absolute Reality transcends all qualities, all properties, or all attributes" (VI. 30).

Omnipotence of Thought

The Self of us all being the Self of the Universe, and the entire universe with all its objects being ideas in their ultimate nature, every one of us has the power to be what we like and wish to be. The limits and possibilities we put on our thought are the limits and possibilities of our becoming. We are the masters and determiners of our destiny. We are the creators of our own bodies and environment. Our happiness and suffering are our own creation. We can be what we want to be, from a vermin to God. In the words of Swamiji : "All

your world being but your own creation, your own idea, why think yourself a low, miserable sinner ? Why not think yourself into a fearless, self-reliant incarnation of Divinity ?" (II. 71). "Just as you think so you becomes" (III. 274), "You have hypnotised yourself into a rigidity with regard to outside phenomena, and thus it is that you involve yourself into all sorts of sickness and trouble......All the so-called facts which you believe to be facts are simply an illusion, a delusion, hypnotised into you by the senses" (III. 272). "All the universe is but my idea......Believe it and you will see that the world is your idea." (III. 277). "This is a fact that all the differences, all the circumstances in the world are my creation, my doing, nothing else" (III. 281).

All our birth, death and suffering are of our own creation. "Vedanta asserts that even your birth and even your parents are made by yourself.........Look at the question from any side, you are master of your destiny" (VI. 177). 'Even when you are born you are the master of your destiny." (VI. 177). Desire and determination are the secret of all. "When the people of this world desire anything, they do not see what the consequences will be, they do not see to what they will lead, and afterwards when they receive the consequences of their desires, they begin to weep and cry and bewail their destiny." (VI. 198). "You are the master of your circumstances, you are master of your destiny". "How is it that people are made miserable ? How is it that difficulties are brought about ? By the conflict of desires......Here are conflicting desires which cannot go together.........While one is being fulfilled, the other suffers and you are in pain........This is how people bring about suffering on themselves". (VI. 206-

7). Even "Your *death* is brought about by your own self...... Death comes the very moment you wish it to come......People die young. Why?" "These youngmen in their heart of hearts sought death. They were sick of taeir own circumstances, and wanted to change their surroundings? That is always the case. (VI. 204-5). "All your sufferings come through your conflicting desires. If you have singleness of aim and unity of purpose, you will have no trouble, you will have no suffering, but if there is conflict and discord . you must suffer" (VI. 200).

Which desires get satisfied sooner? 'Those desires carry the day which have the most strength in them ..Strength comes from truth and truth only. Those desires alone which have- more of truth in them, more of rightenesses, justice, godliness or purity, will carry the day." (VI. 210). "The godly nature of your desire insist upon their fulfilment; but when you make them selfish or personal... they are delayed in fulfilment" (VI. 212) simply because they come in conflict with the desires of others and with other desircs of you own.

Swamiji has discovered a very interesting law—the Law of Desire-fulfilment, which he enunciates like this: "The very moment you rise above the desire, the object of desire seeks you, and the very moment you assume the craving, seeking, asking, begging attitude, you will be repelled; you will not have, you cannot have the object of desire. Rise above the thing, stand above it, and it will seek you. That is the Law." (VIII, 98). "All your wishes must be fulfilled; all your desires must be fructified. Everything that you long for must be brought before you, but there is one condition. Before it is realized there must come upon you a state where you give up the desire. And when you give up the desire,

then the desire will be satisfied" (VIII. (101). "The more you seek things the more you lose them. The more above desire you are, the more you feel yourself higher than want, the more the abjects will seek you." (II. 108). "The man who entertains desires majestically, as it were, who entertains desires with indifference, with a neutral attitude, will alone see the desires fructifying" (II. 115). "You rise above the object, and the object will seek you." (II. 120). "You are only to be above desires and then will the desires be fulfilled. That is the secret of fulfilment of desires". (II. 125).

Thus renunciation, desirelessness, indifference to all that may happen, and detachment from worldly objects is the secret of all greatness and achievements according to Swamiji. He who seeks for nothiug gets every thing. And early or late in our career as iudividuals we have to disposses ourselves of all in order to be the masters of all Verily, indeed, all our desires are fulfilled early or late, we get all we want, but he who wants nothing desires nothihg, is not running after anything, is not helplessly attached to anything, becomes a magnet to attract everything, and gets all his needs and requirements fulfilled. In fact the fulfilment of the mission of life consists in being nothing in particular, in desiring and feeling want of nothing, in rising above all wants and desires. Nature teaches us this lesson by giving us repeated shocks of forced separation from things to which we become unduly attached. This according to Swami Rama Tirtha, is The Law of Life Eternal. "He who suffers willing Crucification, to him the world is Garden of Eden. To all else it is *paradise lost*." "Let any one set his heart on anything whatever of the world, and unavertedly the wrath of nature must, must be visited

upon him". "Betrayed we must be, when we trust the forms, or when in our heart of hearts we give that honour to fales things and personalities which is only due to One Reality' (III. 9). "Death of the selfish personality is the Law of Life" (III. 22). "Dispossess your mind of all you have, become poor and without claims, and behold you shall be the Lord and Sovereign of all things" (III. 36).

Self-realization

There is an urge within all of us to attain to the status of Self-realization. Nature helps us along this line. Suffering indicates that we fall short of the ideal. "The line along which evolution courses and all this nature works is that each and all should, step by step, by slow degrees, come up nearer and nearer to the realization of the Divinity within them. All this struggle for existence is due to people not realizing this" (III. 159). "It must be advanced, it ought to approach the Divinity (III. 199). "The Law of Nature, the Law of Providence is that we shall rise to Self-Consciousness. All the follies of the world, all the worldly wisdom of men in this world, is tending to push every one on the right road to this Divinity, to realize his unity and oneness with God" (VIII. 61). Suffering is the result of your not making progress along self-realization. "The plan of nature is that you should lift yourself to that plane of God-cansciousness. Suffering consists in your not coming to that ideal" (VIII.62) "It is the plan of nature that you should reach the goal" (III. 92), "Misfortune, anxiety and trouble are to make you realize the Heaven within" (III. 95). "Pains teach you and tell you that you must not cling to worldly things or feel them to be real" (III. 97). "Pain always succeeds or follows the clinging or

attachment to the material, the illusory, the *mayavic* objects". (III 96). "It is the Law of Nature that you must rise to your Godhead; and if you don't do that, well, slap after slap, knock after krock will be your lot." (III. 98). "If you begin to depend or rely upon a material object for its own sake,........ you must be foiled" (III. 112). "He who is one with Brahman has all his desires fulfled. Nobody will ever deceive him. No pain or trouble will ever come to him" (III. 118). Attachment to all other things brings about suffering and pain. The Law of Suffering is enunciated by Swamiji thus: There is the Law that every body in this world who will attach himself to any personality or worldly object, shall have to suffer; either that friend or object will be taken from him, or one of them will die, or there will be a rupture between them. This is an inevitable Law...........Whenever a man attaches himself to any worldly object, whenever a person begins to love an object for its own sake, whenever a man tries to seek happiness in that object, he will be deceived"...... "You cannot find happiness and pleasure by attaching yourself to worldly objects......All your worldly attachments will end in the breaking of heart......All worldly attachments bring misery in their train, because all worldly attachment is idolatory". (III. 145). The reason is "Attachment to one object detaches you from all" (II. 75).

It is why there is nothing in the world which is worth desiring and attaining. All the sensual pleasures and in pain, for pleasure and pain are inseparable and go together. "There is not a rose of sensual pleasure which has not got the bee of injury concealed in it. Unbriddled desires must be punished by inevitable pain" (VIII. 169). "In the womb of every

pleusure is pain present and in the womb of every pain is pleasure present. He who takes up the pleasure must take up the pain also. They are inseparable. The way of true happiness is to rise above them". (III. 257).

Where to seek for Happiness then? Within oneself says Swami Rama Tirtha. "Oh, Heaven is within you. Seek Happiness not in the objects of sense; realize that Happiness is within yourself" (I. 26). "Realize the Heaven within you and all at once all the desires are fulfilled, all the misery and suffering is put an end to" (I. 25). All happiness is within you. "The bliss, the real metropolis of happiness is within you. All Heaven is within you, the source of pleasure is within you. This being the case, how unreasonable it is to seek happiness elsewhere" (I. 20-21). "Enjoyment and happiness come only when a person lives in his Godhead, lives in the Divinity" (III. 241).

Thus Self-realization, realization of the Divinity within oneself, feeling one's oneness with the Absolute, and working in tune with the Infinite, is the only way to Happiness and Power. "When we realize the Truth and feel the Reality, the world is converted into a veritable Heaven for us. There are then no foes, no fears, no troubles, no anaieties, no pain, Verily, verily, it is so." (III. 86). "It is a fact; realize it and make yourself happy; feel it; live it, and you will see that you live in the world of miracles, you will see that all the powers serve you; feel it, and all the suns, stars and moons obey your commands. This you will find by persistent experiments" (III. 88).

The ʼate of the ignorant individual : Life, Death, Rebirth and the Law of Karma.

The ignorant individual who is not aware of his kinship

and identity with the Absolute and who has not realized it in his life, is tossed up and down in the world and takes on various forms of life one after another as determined by his desires and by the law of action and reaction Death follows life and life follows death. "So long as the world appears to you", says Swamiji, "to be different from you, you are an imprisoned personality in this world, you will always remain bound to this wheel of transmigration, birth and death." (VI 240).

Death cannot bring an end to our personality. For, "nothing in this world can be destroyed." (VI. 181), much less the individual personality. "If our mental energies pass away, then there will be something passing into nothing; but you know that it is impossible. Something can never pass into nothing. To avoid that fallacy, you must believe that after death, mental desires, mental energy and mental activity do not pass into nothing." (VI. 183). Moreover, "People in this world are being born with different propensities and different capacities" (VI. 185). "You will have to assume or accept that the child brings this difference of inclinations and propensities with him, as it were, from the other world" (VI. 185). "All those desires which people bring with them at their birth are brought from previous existent form". (VI. 186). "These desires lived, existed, were present a short while ago" (VI. 186).

There is a law of action and reaction, called the Law of Karma, which governs the life and death of the individuals. It is also called the law of cause and effect. All that happens in our life depends upon what we have done, thought, and desired. All that we are is the result of our past efforts. And

the future is determined by our present actions and their consequences. "Whatever circumstances, whatever environment, whatever fate or destiny you have, that is made by your past desires, past wills or wishes and your past actions." (V. 157). By the Law of Karma and justice we are punished or awarded for our acts. Sow the wind and by the most stern, unrelenting, irresistable law you reap the whirlwind; you must be visited with pain and suffering.........In the most solitary cave commit a sin and you will in no time be astonished to see that the very grass under your feet stands up and bears testimony against you.........You cannot cheat nature, Providence.........Try to throw dust into the eyes of God and you will be blinded yourself." (IV. 91).

How does the Law operate? "By the Law of Spiritual Affinity, he is drawn to such persons, he is born to them, he is now to enter such brain, such physique, such body, as will enable the particular desires in him to be fructified". (VIII. 21). "The law of Karma," according to Swamiji, "gives you the most natural explanation, the plainest and the most scientific". (VI. 187). It means that "All your unfulfilled desires and unsatisfied energy must bear fruit, if not in this world, then in the next". (VI. 190).

The Law of Karma does not counteract but comprehends the Law of Heredity, according to Swamiji. The Law of Heredity is a biological theory which explains the characteristics of the progeny in relation to those of the parents and has no reference to the preexisting personality of the newly born child. The whole truth is much more than what the Law of Heredity implies. "The Law of Heredity remains true, in as much as it gives him a particular kind of physical frame by

which he is to execute his own will" (VIII. 21). 'The parents have given us this body, this brain, because we demanded it, we asked for it." (VIII. 22). "The Law of Karma is not opposed to the Law of Heredity. It covers that. It explains that, but at the same time the law of Karma ....also explains the apparent loss of mental energy at the time of death; the Law of Herdity does not explain that." (VI. 187-8). At the time of rebirth. "All your mental energy", that was released from the dead body of the previous birth, "is drawn to a soil where the environment, the circumstances will be congenial to its growth, helpful to its function, and of great aid in its development. In other words the compound or resultant of your desires or mental energy is drawn to a place where you will find congenial soil, where all unfulfilled desires will fructify, will be realized" (VI 188-9). Heredity is like a printing firm, it gives one's desires ready material." (VIII 21).

The Law of Karma explains the differences and variety in human life. It saves God of the accusation of partiality and favouritism. It brings about justice and satisfaction to each individual as to his present lot. By its operation punishment and reward of all our social and moral acts are effected. If the law of Karma were not in operation. "This apparent variety, this apparent conflict, will be a blame and blot on the face of God, if God were different from the people who suffer and from the people who are rich and poor." (VI 61). Law of Karma assures as that "God is never remiss in the discharge of His duties. Any unselfish act lays God under debt. He may not pay you by the hand which he employed in receiving, but through some other hand (person) you will be paid with interest" (V. 56). "If you deserve.......

the object of your desire will be brought to you, will come to you. If you make yourselves worthy, help must come to you". (VIII. 32).

Does rebirth, as determined by the Law of Karma. which involves desire-fulfilment, affinity, justice and development of personality, take place immediately, or is there any intervening time passed somewhere else, as the belief in heaven, hell and other worlds indicates? According to Swami Rama Tirtha there is some truth in the popular belief. Here are the views of Swamiji on Death and After-death experiences. "After every death there is life, and after life there is death. Death means change of state and nothing else............Simply a change of state". (VI. 221). "Death, according to Vedanta, is a long sleep.........After enjoying the rest of death, you have to be born again into this world. You are reincarnated or reborn. Rebirth or reincarnation is life waking up again after enjoying a nap." (VI. 221). "After a man dies, he is not incarnated on the spot at once...not reincarnated immediately. He passes through an intermediate state which we call the state of 'death' or the state of long sleep......It is a state of sleep, and it has all the properties of sleep" (VI. 222). Sleep is characterised by dreams. "The period between the death and the next birth......will pass in your hell or heavens; it will pass in your paradises or in your purgatories.........These are the dreamlands which pass between one death and the next birth." (VI. 227). "If you are true to your dogmas, after death you will have a heaven of the same sort as you are expecting. In reality hell or heaven after death is dependent upon yourselves......In reality the heaven and hell are simply your dreams, nothing more; dreams which appear

to you to be real at that time." (VI. 230-1). "The time of the wakeful state is different from that of the deamland." "You will live in heaven or hell for eternity from the standpoint of the dreaming subject, but not from that of the wakeful subject". (VI. 232). As, "In your dreams it is you yourself that appear as the subject on the one side and as the object on the other......You are the object and you are the subject." (VI. 235). "So, in your long sleep of death, you are hell and heaven, and you are the man who is enjoying heaven or suffering in hell." (VI. 236).

Can a man in one life be reborn as an animal in the next? If so way ? This question has often been a controvertial one. Swami Rama Tirtha answers it thus : "If this man is entirely made up of animal passions he will get a most proper and befitting body in the form of hogs or dogs, because there he will inherit a body which is not tired of eating, which is not tired of gratifying animal desires". (VI. 197).

Why should we not remember our past births, if there have been any ? is the usual objection of those who do not believe in rebirth or pre-existence. Swamiji answers this objection thus: "You can remember your past births if you like, but then it is not worthwhile to try the experiment because according to another law, the Law of Evalution, you have to go onward, you have to go ahead. Let the dead bury the dead, let the past bury its past" (VI. 191).

The Self-realised man alone is free from the rounds of death and rebirth, and dreamlike experiences of heaven and hell. "It is not every body who after death has to undergo these stages of heaven and hell, or who is reborn after death. The liberated souls......are not to be subjected to

reincarnation; these are not to find themselves imprisoned in hells or heavens; all hells and heavens are in them; all the worlds are in them". (VI 233).

The Law of Life, Death and Rebirth works up to the gate of liberation and leaves us there absolutely free. The Law of Karma too works in our life as long as we are limited and selfish egoes, working for petty individual purposes. Both these laws purify us and advance our personality towards their perfection as Self-realised God-men. Pain and suffering endured in life, death and other worlds are spurs to advance towards a painless state. "Pain and sufferings are blessings of this world; if there were no pain and suffering there would be no progress" (VIII 19).

Grades in Spiritual Evolution

From the point of view of spiritual progress humam beings are classified by Swamiji into five classes, namely, the 'mineral men', the 'vegetable men', the animal men', the 'moon men' and the 'sun men' This classification is based on the degree of the expansion of their ego or 'I and mine'. In the words of William James, the American psychologist, we may say in terms of the extension of *me*. The first named has the smallest *me*, confined to his physical body only, while the last named has as wide a *me* as the universe. *The mineral men* according to Swamiji, are "men all of whose actions are centred at a little point. a false self, the little quarantine of a body, three and half cubits long. They are selfish in the lowest sense of the word. These are people whose all actions are directed towards sensuous enjoyment"..."The centre of their orbit is simply the little body" (I. 37). "In the case of *the vegetable men* "the self is expanded only a little." It is

"practically identified with the domestic circle, their wife and children" (I. 40). "The selfishness of these people... becomes evident when the interests of one family clash with the interests of any other family" (I. 41). The *animal men* "identify their self with their class or sect, or their state" (I. 41). "They seek to benefit their own self which is identified with their sect at the cost of other sects or castes" (I. 42). "If they do gocd to some, they do as much mischief, if not more by declaring war upon all other communities and rival sects" (I. 43). In their case "stagnation or fanaticism becomes the cause of misery" (I, 44). *The moon man* "is a normal man." "He is a man who identifies himself with the whole nation or the whole race. You might call him the patriot. He cares not whether those for whom he works belong to this creed or that. Irrespective of denomintion, caste, or creed, he makes it a point to advance the cause of all those who live in the same land with him" (I. 45). "The selfishress in their case, meaning patriotism...sets one nation against another, and here we have bloodshed and warfare, thousands—nay. Some times millions upon millions—of beings shedding, spilling and drinking blood and making the face of this beantiful earth blush with slaughter, blush red with blood" (I. 46). The *Sun men*, God men, or Free men "are the people to whom the wide world is home, irrespective, of caste, colour. creed community or country." "The universe is the self of this man; the wide world, the lowest creature, minerals, vegetables, the self of this man" (I. 48). In short, the interests of the first type are confined to and the ego is identified with the body, at the altar of which everything else can be sacrificed. In the case of the second type the

family becomes the object of interest and identification. In the third the community (a particular social or religious group), and in the case of the fourth it is the country or nation with which identification is made. The last type has discarded all such limitations. He thinks of the good of all creatures, feels for all and identifies himself with the entire creation. The last type is the salt of the earth and the purpose of evolution.

To be a God-man should be the ideal of every individual. It is living in accordance with truth, in accordance with the laws of Nature. God-men are those who live in tune with the Universe and the Universe, nature, and all creatures respond to their feeling of unity and universal brotherhood. Such a man never possesses, never owns any thing exclusively for himself. He is happy at every place, with every body and on all occasions. Swamiji says. "Science shows that all of you are one; upon the physical plane, upon the psychological plane, upon the astral plane, you are all one......Those who do not feel this brotherhood and do not carry out this brotherhood in every-day life in practice, must suffer." (IV. 289). "Just as you feel that this one body is yours, so begin to feel and realize that all bodies are yours...It is an experimental fact that if you concentrate your mind and your energies upon this truth of oneness, you will observe that all the bodies in this world will begin to move and behave exactly in accordance with your desires" (IV. 34) Feel and realize all the bodies of men as yours...feel all the gardens of the world as yours...Feel that all the talented forces and gifted minds are yours...that all are ye, all the bodies are yours... When you try to feel that way, your experience will prove the truth that all are one" (IV. 285-6). "So long as you are

in perfect harmony with nature, so long as your mind is in tune with the universe and you are feeling and realizing your oneness, each and all, all the circumstances and surroundings, even winds and waves, will be in your favour." (II 53). "The very moment you realize your unity with fellow beings, all prosperity is yours" (II. 50). "Bear in mind that the Self in you is the same as the Self in the surroundings or environments : and when your mind is in harmonious vibration with this underlying Supreme Self and to you has become the whole world your body, outside aids helps must fly to you as naturally and spontaneously as the hand runs to the place of sensation." (II 59) It was a firm conviction of Swamiji based on his own experience and experiments, that "The whole world is bound to co-work with one who feels himself one with the whole world." (V. 80). "The law of spiritual unity never deceives. Just *feel* this unity and you find all creation behaving as if your own body." (VIII. 142).

It is foolish to think of others in terms of inferiority or backwardness. You should not look down upon any body nor find fault with any of your fellow beings. You should look upon them as younger brothers in spiritual evolution. 'Some people are today where you were ten births back and some people are today where you will be ten births hence. Thus you must have universal love for all, not looking down upon anything or anybody. Then who are so high above envy not, for you will be there in due time." (VII. 19-20).

If there is anybody whom one has to reform and raise it is oneself. The world will remain what it is in spite of all the reformers who have decried it from time to time.

It is a school for the training of the spirit and a ground fcr the play of one's love, kindness and charity. "Give your personality a lift and you lift the whole world" (II. 138). "The best way to spread Vedanta is to live Vedanta," (II-139) "The moment we stand as reformers of the world, we become reformers of the world. Physician, heal thyself". (II. 143). 'Krishna came". "Christ came." "All the many philosophers came, but there is still the same pain, suffering and trouble. The world we find the same......Have all your great scientific productions made people happier? It is just like a fraction whose numerator and denominator have both been increased... It is like the tail of a dog." (II. 145). So what the world needs are not reformers of others but reformers of themselves. It is the spirit of man and not the world that should become more and more refined: Hence Swamiji published a what in the following words: "WANTED Reformers; not of others, but of themselves, Who have won, not University distinctions, but victory over the local self. Age: Youth of Divine Joy. Salary Godhead. Apply sharp with no begging solicitations but commanding decision to the Director of the Universe, your own Self". (*Heart of Rama*, p 219).

The only purpose of our life, of nature's activities and of the struggle for existance and superiority is, according to Swami Rama Tirtha, this Self-reform, Self expansion or Self-realization. Man suffers and endures pain so long as he has not attained to that height of culture. "He may accumulate all the riches of the world, but no peace can accrue unless one knows himself as the Self of all. There is but one *purpose* running through and underlying all changes and circumstance in the world and that is Self-realization. And

indeed, as long as a man's life can ground itself only on artificiality and superficiality or appearance, each new change and reform turns up only a new stratum of dry rubbish, bringing no soil to view. So long as perfect health is not realized in feeling yourself the *whole*, all your show of civilization is only a linen bandage hiding the swollen sore of painful body-consciousness". (V, 119).

The Way to Self-realization

Self-realization being the ultimate purpose of Nature, the highest ideal of life and the only object worth striving for, we have now to learn the method by which it can be attained. Swami Rama Tirtha having attained it in his own life, it is but desirable to know if he has given any hints on its proper method.

The first requisite for Self-realization, according to Swamiji, is *Self-relience*. "Stand on your own feet whether you are great or small, whether you are placed very high or very low." (III. 70). "Faith in external principles will not save you: Faith in your own Divinity will save. Believe, have living faith in your own Divinity. Respect yourself and every body will respect you." (III. 73). "Why should you consider youself dependent on God. Christ, Mohemad, Buddha, Krishna, or any other of the saints of the world ? Free you are each and all. Look at things from the standpoint of your Atman, and not through the eyes of others. Feel your independence, feel that you are the God of Gods, the Lord of Lords, for that you are...So long as a man does not realize his own Divinity, there will always be suffering" (III. 7475) Depend not on others." (III. 82).

"Realization comes in two ways, either by *faith* or through *knowledge*". (II. 213).

The knowledge that liberates and makes you realize your Divinity is not mere i tellectual grasp It is to be felt and lived bv. "This divine knowledge *that you are God*. This knowledge acquired not only through the intellect, but in the language of *feeling*, this knowledge brought into your action, permeating your blood, running through your veins, throbbing with your pulse, being instilled and drilled into you can make you *Jivaumukta* (Liberated in life)." (III 140)

The process of Self-realization is more of a negative nature than of a positive one. One has to undo much more than positively do. For what you have to become you already are. But you do not know it on account of the ignorance that has enveloped you. You have to shake off the masks that you have put on your face and with which you have falsely identified yourself. "Your realization of God-consciousness, realization of Divinity is not a thing to be accomplished. It is not a thing to be achieved. It is not a thing to be done. It is done already.You are that already...You have not to do anything, in the positive sense of the word, in order to realize God simply undo what you have done in the way of making your prison-house, and there you are God already...All your attachments, all your loves and hatreds, all your desires are shackled and chained. These bind you. These do not allow you to see God. These are your prison-house" (IV. 2). "You have simply to undo what you have already done in the way of forming dark cocoons of desires around you." (II. 78) "The path of salvation, the way to realization is apparent death...and crucification and nothing else" (II.85). "All property, all possessions are bondage" (VIII.65). "Demand nothing and expect nothing then everything will come to you" (VIII. 66). There can be no

happiness under the sun unless a man gives up all sense of property, possessions, clinging and attachment." (VI. 168).

Renunciation of everything which is suggested by Swamiji is not asceticism of any kind." Renunciation does not mean asceticism." (III. 186). It does not mean "retiring into the forest, living aloof from all society, shunning everything, hating everything." (III. 135). "Realizing the Divinity in each and all, this is rennciation according to Vedanta." (III 186).

In actions and in actual life the process of realization should take two forms, uamely, 1. "Denial of little; 2. Positive assertion of the Real Self. Let the mind be relaxed of all care and anxiety for the body or anything. Give up and deny all desire, ambition or expectation ..Feel yourself above the body and its environments, above the mind and its motives, above the world and its opinions. Feel yourself to be the all-pervading Supreme..., above causation, above phenomena, and one with the all Bliss." (V. 196-7).

There being no other Reality but God, your Self, everything experienced by us should be taken as divine, nothing profane. Everything should be made a symbol of Divinity." (V. 205).

Surrender everything to the God within you. "Make your whole life a flute. Make your whole body a flute (empty). Empty it of selfishness and fill it with divine creation." (IV 88).

Complete mergence of the finite individuality in the infinite Divinity, which is the very essence of religious or mystic consciousness, is a sure way to the realization of our Divinity. "Religion is essentially a mysterious process by which the mind or intellect reaches back and loses itself in the inscrutable source, the Great Beyond." (V. 2). It is "that indescribable realization of the Unknowable where all distinction of caste,

colour, and creed, all dogmas and theories, the body and mind, time, space and causality, together with all that is contained therein, this world and all other imaginable worlds are washed clean off into *what* no words can reach." (V. 23). "The intellect and along with it the whole of the objective world then melt into the Unknowable Beyond." (V. 7) This state of thoughtless, egoless and objectless experience is called Samadhi in India and mystic experience in the west. Its practice convinces one of the existence of the Divinity in himself and leads to its realization in every-day life.

If one is not fortunate enough to have a glimpse or taste of this type of mystic experience, let him meditate on and practice any one of the three attitudes towards God, the Supreme Reality which governs and controls the Universe, nemery, "I am His". "I am Thine ", "I am He". Of course the last form of meditation and practical observance is the best. "So for as the forms are concernd, the second form, "I am Thine" is higher than the first, "I am His", and the third form "I am He" is the highest". (IV. 59). According to Swamiji it is the ultimate purpose of education to teach us to look upon the world from the last point of view. "True education means to learn, to look at the Universe through the eyes of God." (V. 17). All inspiration comes from that attitude. "Inspiration is God doing. When the little self gives up possession of the body, the person is inspired". (II. 97). Man gets inspired only when he loses himself and allows God to make use of his body and mind. "The way to inspiration is nothing less than crucification". (II. 106).

In brief, and in its last analysis, *Feeling* which is an imperfect English version of the Sanskrit word *Bhavana*, is

the shortest and surest way to God-realization, "Feel that you are that Infinite, indestructible Self, and what metamorphosis what a grand change does it bring about in your position ?" (III. 126). "Know That, think That and *feel* That, and rise above all sorrow and trouble" (III. 126). "FEEL YOURSELF GOD AND YOU WILL BE GOD." (V. 239).

Chanting of Om, on the efficacy of which much stress is laid in the ancient Sanskrit literature. and which was the most favourite verbal symbol of the Divine Being for Swamiji, is, according to him, a great help in Self realization. "OM OM has a charm about it, an efficacy, a virtue in it which directly brings the mind of one, who chants it under control, which directly brings all feelings and all thought in a state of harmony; brings all peace and rest to the soul, and puts the mind in a state where it is one with God. Science may not be able to explain this, but this is a fact which can be verified by experiment." (IV. 109).

Pranayama (breath control) which is one of the processes in Patanjala Yoga, which aims at the experience of Samadhi, mystic experience of thoughtless consciousness, is also recommended by Swamiji, and while recommending and describing it he gives an original and unique application of it in the service of physical, mental and spiritual health. In brief, it is this : "While inhaling feel that you are inhaling Divinnity......While the breath is within you, feel that you are the breath and life of the whole Universe, and you fill and enliven the world...... While exhaling..... feel that all weakness, all darkness is being driven off from your mind." (III. 265). "Consumption diseases of the stomach, blood diseases, and almost every diseases will leave you if you practise that". (III. 266).

Control and regulation of diet is very necessary for an aspirant of Self-realization. "Anything, that retards of checks your supreme happiness or Divine cheerfulness, is *sin.* Most of your sins owe their origin to your food.....If our stomach is at ease, or if we are in good health, we can control our temper, master our passions, control and master our desires". (VIII. 24). "Over eating and eating that kind of food which causes indigestion in you, which makes you subject to blues, is the root of all sins." (VIII. 24). "Overloading the stomach, the use of improper food, is the root cause of all sins." (VIII. 38).

Acceptance of and faith in any religious creed or practice of any rites or ceremonies, which make up the religion of the ordinary men and women, are not necessary for Self-realization. "Attach not undue importance to outside names and forms and ceremonies." (II. 169). "It is living faith which saves and not creed." (II. 172).

For sucess in Self-realization as well as in attainment of any worldly goal, certain principles have to be followed and made use of. Swamiji laid great stress on these principles. They, according to him, are: 1. Continuous, incessant work. 2. Self-sacrifice: "The way to receive is to give" 3. Self-forgetfulness. "Sacrifice your little self, ferget it is the performance of your work, and success must be yours." (II. 7), 4. Universal Love (Co-operation). 5. Cheerfulness. "Work for work's sake. Work is its own reward." (II. 9). 6. Fearlessness. "Be fearless and none can harm you." (II. 12). 7. Self-reliance. "Verily, verily, depend upon yourself and you can achieve anything." (II. 14). "Man is the master of his own destiny."(II. 16).

There are two distinct *stages* in Self-realization. One In which one identifies with the Cosmos, that is, the God

manifested in the concrete world. and the other in which one identifies with the Absolute in which the entire world with its names and forms, time and space, subject and objects are merged and fused into nothing " "Ordinarily we have to realize the whole world as our body, and then the whole world .... is dismissed, is merged in the Truth." (III. 180). "Before realizing the Truth a state where there are no forms and names, no differences—before reaching that God-state, you must pass through a state where you find the true Self permeating and prevading all names and forms." (III. 180). "The oneness with the whole world, that is the Christ state... ..The next higher state will be when you are entirely merged in Divinity; when you are in a state of trance, a state of unison and absorption, a state of immersion. This is the state of God. We call that *Nirvana* or *Samadhi*, a state in which there is no vibration in the mind, no ruffle, no resistance." (III. 183).

Those who have attained that height and tested that experience become free, liberated, and Self-realized here and now. They are called *jivanmuktas* (living liberated ones) in Sanskrit. For the homo sapiens that is the ideal, according to Indian culture. ":These are the men whose mind cannot be disturbed by circumstances: let anything come to pass, they are undisturbed, they are at rest."...The *jivanmukta* is "one upon whom the outside strain can have no staining spot. whom nothing can pollute, and who remains as free as ever." (II. 6162).

The *Upanishads*, the *Yogavashista* and the *Bhagvadgita*, the three great treasurers of Spiritual Wisdom of India, all aim at producting such persons, and Swami Rama Tirtha was certainly one May his life, writings and speeches, which reflect all that is best in India culture, produce many more like him.

THE YOGAVASISTHA AND PRACTICAL VEDANTA

In one of his lectures in America, "The Ancient Spirituality of India", Swami Rama Tirtha said, "One of the greatest books, the most wonderful according to me, ever written under the sun, is "*Yogavasistha*", which nobody on the earth can read without realizing God-consciousness, nobody can read through without becoming one with the All." (VII, 65). And in another lecture in the same country, viz., 'World's Spiritual Debt to India'. he said. "So all your new thought is the old, antiquated thought of Hindus. The genuine centre, the whole truth and all the new thought were known to them. Blessed ones, in order to get to that, you have yet to wait a little and get more knowledge from India, because most of those wonderful writings have not yet been translated into your language. such as the *Yogavasistha* which deals with all the new thought of America. This work is clear, comprehensive and is written in real and true poetry." (VII-117).

These statements clearly indicate how great respect Swamiji had for the *Yogavasistha.* He must have read the work and must have been very much influenced by its remarkable philosophy. In fact the entire outlook of Swamiji, which he was fond of calling Practical Vedanta, is based on the teachings of this great work, which is really a most wonderful creation of the Indian mind and which can rank as one of the best philosophical and literary writings of the world. Among those who have penetrated deeply into the mysteries of life, this work is regarded as of the highest order among those that can give the best guidance in matters both spiritual

and worldly. Such wise men place it even above the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagwadgita* "The saying about it, among the Vedantins", writes Dr. Bhagavandas, "is that it is a work of the *siddhavastha*, that is for the philosopher *Yogin*, who, having mastered the theory, is passing on to the practice of it, while the other well-known works, even the *Gita*, the *Upanishads* and the *Brahmasutras*, are works of the *sadhanavastha*, i. e. for those who are yet trying to master the theory". (*Mystic Experience*, Prefatory Note).

Here we shall quote some appropriate passages (in English translation) from this great and favourite work of Swami Rama Tirtha which may be regarded as the source of inspiration for Swamiji and on which his Practical Vedanta may be regarded as based. We shall also refer to the para lel statements of Swamiji to indicate the identity of thought.

Self-reliance

Swami Rama Tirtha lays great stress on Self-reliance, Self-effort and Self-thinking for the solution of one's problems. He discards the authority of scriptures to be blindly followed. He says, "Do not put the living into the hands of the dead... Think yourselves, meditate yourselves" (VIII. 84, 85). "We have to solve our own problems and to begin to see with our own eyes rather than to continue peeping through the eyes of our most venerable seers and sages of the past gone by." (V. 86). "Stand on your feet whether you are great or small, whether you are placed very high or very low". (III. 70). "Faith in external principles will not save you; faith in your own Divinity will save you......Respect yourself and everybody will respect you". (III. 75). "Why should you consider yourself dependent on God, Christ, Mohemmad, Buddha,

Krishna, or any other of the saints of the world. Free you are, each and all .....Feel your independence, feel that you are the God of Gods, the Lord of Lords.'' (III. 74-75). "Depend not on others''. (III. 82).

Here are a few correspo ding passages from the *Yogavasistha.*

"Here there is no other way to bring about the end of all suffering than one's own effort (III. 6. 14). There is hardly anything existance which is not attainable through right and earnest effort (III. 92. 8). Everything is always and fully attainable by proper self-effort (II. 4. 8). One gets only what one has striven for; nothing is ever achieved by sitting idly (II. 7/19). One is one's own friend or enemy; if one does not save himself, there is no other to save him (VIb. 162. 18). It is our own efforts that can without fail bring victory over our undesirable condition (III. 92. 19). He is a great fool, undoubtedly, who relies on fate, or believes that God will throw him capriciously into hell or heaven (II. 6. 27). He who believes that there is some other power which compels him to think evil thoughts and to do undesirable acts, and so gives up his own effort, whose efficacy is quite evident, is a very wretched man. Whose company should be avoided. (II. 6. 99). They who depend upon fate or destiny lose all their merit, wealth and enjoyments. They are, in fact, their own enemies (II. 7. 3). Those fools who believes that everything is in the hands of some other power called Fate or Destiny are utterly ruined. (II. 5. 29). Our own previously-made efforts alone constitute our destiny (II. 6. 35). As one endeavours so one achieves (II. 6. 2). Just as the wrong acts of yesterday can be rectified today, so the present efforts can modify the wrong efforts of previous ones (VIb. 157. 29). One

should, therefore, set to overcome his miserable destiny (present fate which is the consequence of previous efforts) by having recourse to greater efforts with strong and unflinching determination (II.5.9). The idea that our past acts prompt us to undesirable ends, should be given up and rooted out, for in no case can the past actions have greater force than the present efforts (II 5.10). Every one should exert oneself to the extent of completely eradicating the evil effects of one's previous acts. (II 5.11). There is hardly any doubt that the evils which are the legacy of the past can be absolutely eradicated by the efforts in the living present (II 5. 12). What is not attained by oneself through one's own constantly-made effort, *vairagya* and sense-control, cannot be attained through anything else in the three worlds" (V. 43. 18).

Types of Self consciousness :

Swami Rama Tirtha, as we have seen, divides human beings into four types in accordance with their self-identification, such as those who identify themselves and their interests with the body, the family, the community and the entire creation. In the *Yogavasistha* we find similar classification of the types of self consciousness or self-identification into four. Here are some relevant passages : 'One belief about the Self is that "I am the body" from head to foot, born of parents. This conviction is a cause of bondage. (V. 17. 14). To think and believe that one is a physical body will always bring misery and never peace to him (V 73.11). This belief is really our great foe and should be shunned and avoided as such (IV.33.54). The second belief, which is also a cause of our suffering is "the self of the individual is the mind (manas) which is of the nature of *samkalpa* (desire and imagination)" (VIa. 124. 19). There is

another conviction that the self is "an individual entry" called soul, which is very subtle in its nature. "I am something very subtle, subtler than the pointed end of a hair, beyond all states of mind (V. 17.15). It is very minute (*anu*) and beyond all states of mind (V. 73.10). It is not related to anything else, and imagined to be subtler than the hundredth part of a hair" (IV. 33.51). The fourth and the right conviction according to *Yogavasistha* is what is acceptable to Swami Rama Tirtha and which was the bedrock of his Practical Vedanta, namely, that we are one with the entire Universe, manifested as well as unmanifested. "I am the the whole Universe existing in the state of subtle etheric Void. This conviction brings liberation (V. 17 17). (I am every thing in the Universe): I am the sky, I am the directions, I am gods, I am demons, I am all the worlds, I am sacrifice. (V. 73.3). I am darkness, clouds, oceans, air, fire, etc. (V. 7.34) All that exists in the universe is a portion of my Self, as the waves of an ocean are of the ocean. He sees truly who sees thus (IV. 22.33). I am the Consciousness in the Sun, in all creatures, living and non-living, gods or demons. (V. 26.12). I am the fragrance of flowers, beauty of beauties I am; and I am the experience behind all forms (V. 34.42)."

Practical Vedanta

Practical Vedanta is living according to the last conviction according to which there is nothing particularly desirable or avoidable. It is living in tune with the Infinite and with conscious identification with the whole Universe and with the Power that shapes it. Vasistha in the *Yogavasistha*, makes a distinction between mere thinkers and philosophers and the really wisemen who live by their philosophy. The former are

called *Jnanabandhus* and the latter *Jnanis* by him. Here are the characteristics and behaviour of the real philosopher, the Practical Vedantist, according to *Yogavasistha* which greatly inspired Swamiji:—"He, who through knowledge and constant thought on the theme of his knowledge, has raised himself to the state of experience where mind is no mind, and where there is no longer any consciousness of the fruits of actions, is a *Jnani* (wise man) (VIb. 22.1). He is really at peace within and his peace is reflected in all his activities. He understands everything rightly and brings his knowledge into practice and becomes desireless. (VIb. 22.2) He performs the duties that fall to his share in course of his life without any selfish desire or attachment (VIb 22.5). (Action is life and life is action). "Individuality and action are not two things. The individual is action and action is individuality. (VIb 28.8). As long as there is world-experience (objective consciousness), activity and consciousness cannot be separated (VIb. 28.6). Renunciation of activity is impracticable and impossible as long as the body con inues (VIb. 2.42). Whether a person is enlightened or not, as long as he continues to have an embodied existence the thinking activity continues. Its renunciation is impossible (VIb. 2.35). Those who actually give up action do not succeed in giving it up entirely, for it is rooted in volition (desire). (VIb. 2.43). The root of action cannot be cut down as long as one lives except by knowledge or enlightenment (VIb. 2 44). It does not become those who have become liberated to give up activities that pertain to their station in life as long as they live here (V. 26.16). The home is as quiet a place as a lonely forest for one who has a peaceful mind whereas a lonely jungle is like a city full of

men and activities for one who is not at peace within. (VIb. 3.38)" The Practical Vedantist, according to *Yogavasistha*, is a Great Man of Action (*Maha Karta*), a Great Enjoyer of (Life (*Maha Bhakta*) and a Great Man of Renunciation (*Maha Tyagi*). "He is a great man of action who does everything, experiences likes and dislikes, undergoes pleasure and pain and acts in accordance with or against law, with fruits in view or not in view—*without any care, worry or anxiety*. (VIa. 115 12). He is a great Enjoyer who neither desires anything nor hates anything but *enjoys everything that naturally falls to his share* (VIb. 115.21) He is a Great Man of Renunciation who has *inwardly given up* all desires, all doubts, all prejudices, and all selfish strivings (VIa. 115.34)". Practical Vedanta is thus living a life according to the highest vision of life in which the self is realised as one with the entire Universe. It is living in tune with the whole and thus experiencing the greatest joy of life. *Yogavasistha* is full of hints and guidance for such joyful and active life—free from doubts, worries and cynicism.

Swami Rama Tirtha's Practical Vedantist is also a great man of action, a great man of renunciation and a great enjoyer of life. He advises us: "Having nothing to do be always doing". (V. 179). "Let the mind be relaxed of all care and anxiety for the body or anything. Give up and deny all desire, ambition or expectation...Feel yourself above the body and its environment, above the mind and its motives, above the world and its opinions" (V. 196-7). Yet he says, "never does Vedanta inculcate that you should lead the life of an ascetic, Never, Never". (VI. 90). "Vednnta is not pessimism" VI. 93. "It is rather the highest pinnacle of optimism" (VI. 92).

"Vedanta fills you with energy and strength"(VI.95) "Vedanta is health, physical. mental and spiritual" (V. 164). "If Vedanta does not make you happy, if it does not cast off your burdens, then kick it aside" (III.233). "The temple of Vedanta is in the shop, in the street, in your bed, in your study, in your dining room, in your parlour. These are the temples where you have to live and realise the Truth" (III2. 33). He regards activity and work as essential traits of a Practical Vedantist: "Pushing, marching Labour and no stagnant indolence: Enjoyment of work as against tedious drudgery" (VIII.192). Swamiji lays great emphasis on renunciation as does *Yogavasistha* which advises us to be a *moha tyagi* (great renouncer), but renunciation does not mean giving up activity or work and connection with the world and its objects, or running away to jungles and living a life of isolation and asceticism. "Renunciation does not mean asceticism". (III. 186). It does not mean "Retiring into the forest, living aloof from all society, shunning everything, ha ing everything" (III. 136). "Realizing the Divinity in each and all—this is renunciation according to Vedanta" (III. 186).

Idealism of Yogavasistha and Rama Tirtha

As we have seen above (page 16) Swami Rama Tirtha was a thorough going idealist. According to him "All the world seen by a man is purely and simply sustained by his own Self." (VI. 163). "It is like a dream" (VI. 114). "The object as well as the subject are the creation of your real Self and nothing more" (VI. 237). *Yogavasistha* is one of the greatest Indian works on Idealism. and Swami Rama Tirtha owes much to its study. It holds: "All this is more thought" (VIb.210.11) All the three worlds are constructed by the mind, by thought alone,

(IV 11. 28). "The sky, the earth, air, ether, mountains, rivers, and space, all are fragments of mlnd spread as it were, out." (V. 56.35). "All this is created by the imagination of the Spirit like a dream" (III. 101.35).

The Power of thought

Self or its finite expression, Mind, being the creator and sustainer of the entire objective world, thought, desire, imagination, affirmation and determination—the various activities of mind—are regarded as creative forces, and life and its environment as their effect. Both Swami Rama Tirtha and *Yogavasistha* think that thought is omnipotent. Swamiji says: "All your world being but your own creation, your own idea, why think yourself a law, miserable sinner? Why not think yourself into a fearless, self-reliant incarnation of Divinity?" (II.71). "Just as you think so you become" (III. 274). "All the universe is but my idea......Believe it and you will see that the world is your idea" (III. 277). "This is a fact thet all differences, all the circumstances in this world are my creation, my doing, nothing else' (III. 281)."Look at the question from any side, you are master of your destiny". (VI. 177). In *Yogavasistha* we find same ideas about the power of thought. "Mind is all-powerful and capable of doing everything (III 91.16). The mind is the creator of the world: whatever it wills in whatever way, that takes place. (VIb.139.1). The thought that one entertains repeatedly issues forth in the branches of impulses and actions. There is no pewer which can stand in the way of the determinatian of mind. (III.88.18). Man is nothing but what thonght makes him (III.116.24). As a worm creates its cocoon, the mind builds its body for the realization of its desires. (IV. 45.7).

The body takes after and depends upon what the mind is set on. (IV.21 16). When the mind is perfected the entire world of the individual is perfected and is filled with nectar. (V. 21.14)".

Karma, Death and after and Rebirth

The views of Swami Rama Tirtha on these problems are very similar to those of the author of *Yogavasistha*. Swamiji holds: "Whatever circumstances, whatever environments, whatever fate or destiny you have, that is made by your past desires, past wills or wishes and your past actions." (VI.57). "All your unfulfilled desires and unsatisfied energy must bear fruit, if not in this world, then in the next." (VI. 190). "Sow the wind and by the most stern, unrelenting, irrefragable, irretrievable law, you reap the whirlwind; you must be visited with pain and suffering" (IV.91). 'After every death there is life. And after life there is death. Death means change of state and nothing else." (VI.221). Death according to Vedanta is a long sleep...After enjoying the rest of death, you have to be born again into this world. You are reincarnated or reborn. Rebirth or reincarnation is life waking up again after enjoying nap." (VI.221). "After a man dies, he is not incarnated on the spot at once......He passes through an intermediate state which we call the state of 'Death' or the state of long sleep." (VI.222). "The period between the death and the next birth......will pass in your hells and heavens...in your paradises or in your purgatories...These are the dreamlands which pass between one death and the next birth." (VI.227). "Reality the heaven and hell are simply your dreams, nothing more, dreams which appear to you to

be real at that time." (VI. 230-1). "The liberated souls...are not to be subjected to reincarnation ; these are not to find themselves imprisoned in hells and heavens." (VI. 233). In the *Yogavasistha* we read : "There is no place in the Universe--no mountains, no sky, no ocean, no heaven,--where one does not undergo the consequences of actions done by oneself. (III. 95. 33). Every action that has been performed either now or in the past is an effort which will never go fruitless (III.95.34). Death never brings about complete annihilation (VIb. 18-1), That the dead is completely lost is wrong and true to facts (V.71-55). He is having another experience in a different Time-space order. (V.71.65) Having experienced an illusory insensibility of death, the 'dead' comes to experience another state. (III. 20-31). Almost every individual experiences the insensibility of death. (III. 40-81). After It is over, every individual has his experience of the other world in the same manner as we experience dream, day-dream and illusion. (III. 40-33). The order and the contents of the experience of the next world after the insensibility of death are in accordance with the thoughts and desires of the dead. (III.55-26). Then and there this kind of thought arises in him in the same way as the dream idea arises in the mind of the person gone to sleep. (III.55-21). He feels that he has been placed in the situation to undergo retribution of his actions of the past life. He feels that he is going to heaven or hell, (III,55;35). Bound by hundreds of desires and hopes, thus the individual goes from one life to another like a bird from one tree to another. (IV.43.26), Those, however, who have become freed (*mukta*) do not take to another birth, as the desires and activities of the freed men are life fried seeds

which do not give rise to sprouts. After bodily death they enter the great Being which is free from the states of rise and fall, from ego and non-ego, which is neither far nor near; and which is neither being nor non-being. (V.42. 11-15)

Self-realization and its Methods

Swami Rama Tirtha's writings and speeches are full of hints on Self-realization. *Yogavasistha* is also primarily concerned with Self knowledge and Self-realization. Most of the ideas of Swamiji are very similar to those of *Yogavasistha.* Here are some ideas of Swami Rama Tirtha: Self-realization is the only source of Happiness and Power. All other pursuits of happiness lead to misery and suffering. "When we realize the Truth and feel the Reality, the world is converted into a veritable Heaven for us. There are then no foes, no troubles, no anxieties, no pain. Verily it is so, verily (III. 88). "It is a fact; realize it and you make yourself happy; feel it, live it, and you will see that you live in the world of miracles; you will see that all the powers serve you." (III. 88). Sensual pleasures do not make us happy. "There is not a rose of sensual pleasure which has not got the bee of injury concealed in it". (VIII. 169). In the womb of every pleasure is pain present...He who takes up the pleasure must take the pain also. They are inseparable. The way of true happiness is to rise above them. (III. 257). "Enjoyment and happiness come only when a person lives in this Godhead, lives in the Divinity" (III. 241), "Oh, Heaven is within you; seek happiness not in the objects of sense; realize that Heppiness is within yourself". (I. 25) "The bliss, the real metropolis of happiness is within you (I. 20)." The author of *Yogavasistha* has said the same things: "Men of Self-

realization have ever increasing power, wisdom and lustre."(V. 76 20). All sufferings leave them as snakes leave their dead skin. (IV. 32.38). The protective powers of the world look after and take care of the man of Self realization (IV.32.38 39) Sensual pleasures and pains go together. One is not experienced without the other. (VI.120.19). All worldly prosperity is misery and all sensual pleasure ends in pain. (VIb.93.73). The happiness which is experienced by one who has taken his stand in the Self is immensely greater than that of any other being. Having had its experience even for a short while, he disregards all other pleasures. (V. 54.69.72).

How to realize one's own Self? *Yogavasistha* give in detail the methods of Self-Realization, which it calls *Yoga*. Swami Ram Tirtha's methods of Self-realization are based on it and are in essence the same. We have given in detail on page 38 the various hints on Self-realization thrown by Swami Rama Tirtha and it is not necessary to repeat them here. There is a statement of Swamiji which gives in essence the process of Self-realization which may be pointed out here : The process of Realization according to him consists in—

1. Denial of little self
2. Positive assertion of the Real Self

Let the mind be relaxed of all care and anxiety for the body or anything. Give up and deny all desire, all ambition, all expectation. Feel yourself above the body and its environ ments, above the mind and its motives, above the world and its opinions. Feel your-self to be the all-prevading Supreme above causation, above phenomena; and one with the all Bliss. (V. 196-7). *Yogavvsistha* similarly tells us : "The sum

of self-realization shines bright in the pure infinite sky of Consciousness only when the cloud of the ego is dispersed. (IV.33.28) The existence of the world is co-relative to the existence of the mind. Both come to an end when one of them comes to an end. This is possible through meditation on the Reality. (IV.17 19) When the mind is dissolved by constant affirmation of the Universal Consciousness, the Universal State of Being is realized. (V 55.2) The entire process of *Yoga* is summarised by the auther of *Yogavasistha* in one couplet which may be tra slated thus : *Yoga* means—

(1) Affirmation of One Reality, (2) Control and Balance of Vital Airs, and (3) Stilling the Mind. (VIa.69.27) Swami Rama Tirtha, as we have seen above, has given hints on every one of the three aspects of Yoga or Method of Self-realization.

The Self-realized man is called a *Jiwanmukta* (liberate living person) in *Yogavasistha*. He is the same as a Practical Vedantist of Swami Rama Tirtha. The life of Swamiji was that of a *Jiwanmukta* as it appears from following characterization of a *Jiwanmukta* given by *Yogavasistha*: "The liberated living man is free from attachment and lives like an emperor", (V.93.24) He neither feels attracted towards nor is repulsed from anything. He does not move among objects as one needy of them or as one having a liking for them. He is above all attachment. (VIb.102.13). He is not disgusted with the people of the world nor they with him. (VIb.98.2). He understands other's mind, behaves gently, and speaks sweetly and softly. (VIb.98.3). His conduct does not harm anybody, he behaves with everybody like a friendly citizen. Outwordly he performs all actions, but internally he

has no desire for anything (VIb.985). He does not shun what he has got, nor does he desire what he has not got. He is noble at heart and peaceful in all activities. (VIb.45.10). He is like a lion out of the cage, free from shackles of caste, creed, profession, tradition and scripture, and transcends the world. (VIa.122.2). His face is never without the lustre of cheerfulness. (VIa.116.8). He is a youth among the young, aged among the old, brave among the brave, a child among children, and sympathetically miserable among sufferer /.77.14). He is loving and tactful amidst his enemies, (V

THE END

❀ WANTED ❀

Reformers

Not of others but of themselves,

Who have won,

Not University distinctions,

But victory over the local self;

Age: the youth of divine joy;

Salary: Godhead;

Apply sharp

With no begging solicitations

but commanding decisions to

the Director of the Universe,

Your Own Self.

OM ! OM ! OM !

—SWAMI RAMA